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THE MEDICAL ASPECT OF TEMPERANCE

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE
CONVENTION OF THE

National Reform and Christian
Citizenship Associations

IN
WILLARD HALL, CHICAGO

ON

DECEMBER 16TH, 1896

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WESTERN BRITISH AMERICAN, PRINT,
358 Dearborn Street.
CHICAGO.



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THE MEDICAL ASPECT OF TEMPERANCE.

Every intelligent person in this land who loves his God, his fellow-man, and his country—and I mean God with a capital G—is interested in abolishing alcoholic intemperance. Alcohol has no place as a food. Alcohol is not a medicine. Why then is it used as such? Well, “the dog returns to his vomit” and “the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire,” and we naturally infer that animal instinct is in part responsible.

But why is alcohol used for a medicine? To this I reply, I do not know, and am not responsible. I do not know of any logical defense having ever been made in its favor. It is commonly and ignorantly believed to be a stimulant, but scientific investigation and logical reasoning prove such a belief too vague for self respecting, thinking men to entertain.

You are at once interested in having a definition of a stimulant, from a medical point of view, that will hold good in all cases. A stimulant, then, is an agent that will arouse a vigorous action of the vital function.

Does alcohol come under this head?

Let us consider for a moment, from a scientific point of view, the influence of alcohol. Alcohol is a poison, as every intelligent person knows. Alcohol must get into the blood circulation after it is administered. We know that it has an influence on the heart, and we know also that “in the blood is the life,” and that as soon as the living matter of the blood comes in contact with alcohol, it is no longer living. How then does it stimulate that which it kills? It simply does *not* stimulate. The pulse may beat quicker, but the heart throws out less blood. The irritating effect of the poison is sufficient to explain this.

What is alcohol then? It is a poisonous irritant when administered as a medicine. It has been a long-harbored belief with the laity that the doctor will either kill or cure, but a logical sequence of the alcoholic physician's belief is that he will both kill and cure. It is to be regretted that so many common drunkards have reached premature graves as a result of this physician's stimulant. It matters not what excuse the physician offers, it must be a flimsy one.

The Bible says: "Woe unto him who giveth his neighbor drink." And we can't lay all the blame at the door of the saloonkeeper. The common people don't drink intoxicating liquor because the saloonkeeper tells them to, any more than they become morphine fiends from the advice of others. There should be no saloons, but we will have a hard time abolishing the same, so long as the physicians, who claim to be educated men, and whose profession is legalized, prescribe alcohol and so lay the foundation for a drunkard's appetite. They are formidable accomplices of that notorious politician—the disreputable saloonkeeper.

Alcohol is not a heat-producer, as the temperature of the body is known to diminish in proportion to the quantity used. Men have lived on water for over 40 days, but they are unable to live on alcohol for half that period. Why, then, give it with the fallacious belief of its being a nutrient? It is an established fact, the world over, that the total abstainer has more power of endurance, other things being equal, than either the moderate drinker or the inebriate. Alcohol lowers vitality, as it destroys the living matter in the body, and anything that will lower the vitality will lower the power of endurance. This is why the surgeon dreads to put the drunkard on the operating table. The hard muscle which he sometimes boasts of is not a normal (healthy) muscle. The semi-fluid living matter in the cell has been changed into an excess of lifeless formed material; consequently, the drunkard goes around with less vitality, with less power of endurance, and with a mental disorder that may lead him to execute the darkest crime on the calendar. And of all the hopeless prospects on earth the drunkard's future is the one to be dreaded above all others.

The much talked of gold-cure should offer no encouragement for any one to drink. The vitality lost through strong drink can never be restored. The so-called "gold cure" is conducted in an unprofessional way with nostrum

secrecy, under the pretense that it is a harmless remedy. A harmless remedy, however, would not destroy man's virility or leave such disordered systems as this "gold cure" is alleged to do. Who gets the gold? Did you ever know of a drunkard having much? If you did, you will remember that he made bad use of it. The pretense of curing inebriates with bichloride of gold is the old tale of the charlatan, but credulity and ignorance often deceive more than the drunkard.

I was informed recently that a patient with a short leg went to the notorious Dr. Dowie for treatment, and came away with the short leg lengthened, or believed that it was, because somebody told him so. I learned afterwards that Dowie charged \$10 a week for board that was worth about \$3; so I concluded that he must be a leg-pulling specialist. Any intelligent person who visits the so-called "divine healing" homes will easily realize how near the truth the daily papers came, when they stated that the majority who attended Dowie's meetings were below the average in intelligence. The few intelligent persons who go there may be excused, when we consider that in three medical schools—Allopathic, alias Regular, Homeopathic and Electric—the use of alcohol and other poisons as medicines is taught. They give alcohol or strychnine for a tonic, and you give them to the rats for a poison. Do you wonder, then, why bed-ridden patients who have been half-poisoned get well on plain board at Dowie's?

Diseases which do not yield to proper medical treatment do not disappear at Dowie's, but so long as the legalized physician gives alcohol and morphine and makes drunkards and drug fiends; so long as the physician gives poisons, whether alcohol, strychnine or others, and thereby lays the foundation for more serious suffering and lower vitality by the slow poisoning process, just so long will there be necessity for saloonkeepers, Keeleys, Schweinfurths, Dowies, *et hoc genus omne*.

If you lower the vitality with poisons, and derange the intellect with alcohol, morphine and other narcotics, who among the list thus treated do you expect to fight the battles of brave men, and free our country from the superstitious beliefs fostered during the dark ages? Poison and alcohol treatment is exclusively shown by statistics to be worse than empirical, or, in the words of the late Sir Astley

Cooper, it is "founded on conjecture and improved by murder." The constant diarrhoea of words and theories presented by alcohol and poison advocates are followed by more serious afflictions than Asiatic cholera.

The continued hue and cry of the new cure, always advertised in the daily papers, is old and stale, and the gross deception of such affords ample opportunity for seeing patients "suffer many things of many physicians." Some medical men who prescribe alcohol and morphine state that in small quantities neither does any harm. The drunkard at first claims to take alcohol at pleasure and to let it alone at pleasure. So, you see, such physicians are corroborated by the proper authority. The morphine fiend often gets the first dose from the physician to relieve pain. Such practice may seem laudable, but it is simply doing evil that good may come.

It seems strange that Hippocrates, 400 years B. C., refused to give any poison, and the very mention of his name indicates reference to a pure and lofty standard. The dominant school proudly claims him as its father in medicine, but it would be a difficult matter to reconcile such diametrically opposed records, so with arrogance, born of assumption, they assert that all of their valuable remedies are poisons. The medical school that maintains the belief of Hippocrates, and which is represented by two colleges in the United States, has amply demonstrated by practice the superiority of such a course, both for the relief of pain and disease.

The teachings and practice of this school are not responsible for a single drunkard or morphine fiend. This much is hopeful, and so, with patience, born of consciousness and duty, these pioneers of truth and science will maintain the unimpeachable standard of Hippocrates: No alcohol; no poison; no criminal practice. If for no other reason than the fact that these men practice medicine successfully without alcohol, it is sufficient to condemn the use of it as medicine. But let me quote statistics covering ten years in the treatment of typhoid fever patients, authorized by Dr. Stedman of the Boston City Hospital, 1892: 1042 cases treated by alcoholics, gave 386 deaths; 1042 cases treated by mineral acids, gave 133 deaths; 1042 cases treated by quinine and salicylic acid, gave 119 deaths; while 1042 cases left to nature and good nursing, gave but 81 deaths.

But why is alcohol injurious? Because it is a poison. It also has narcotic properties. If a quantity of dilute alcohol be held in the mouth a few minutes, the sense of taste is temporarily destroyed. If this were all, the injury would be trivial; but both the temporary and permanent injury are due to the poisonous property of the alcohol.

Before proceeding further, let us consider what is meant by a poison. A poison is any substance with an inherent tendency to destroy living matter. This definition is founded upon a knowledge of the effects of testing agents used directly on the living matter of the body. About one-tenth part of the body weight is living. We know living matter from the manifestations of bioplasm, and alcohol or any other poison, even in homeopathic attenuation, will destroy this living matter, as has been amply demonstrated with the aid of the microscope.

"In the blood is the life." It is then easy to understand what influence a poison has on the life force when brought in contact with the living matter in the blood, as almost all substances administered internally are taken into the blood circulation. But it is claimed by certain physicians that a medicinal dose, or small quantity, of poison does no harm, and the whole teaching of Homeopathy is that quantity alters quality; but as authorities are unable to demonstrate the proof of this assertion, nothing is added to science. If the proof of anything depends upon mere assertion, the Allopath must be given priority, as he certainly has had most experience with poisons. Prof. Clark says: "All our valuable remedies are poisons (that is, all Allopathic remedies) and as a result every dose we give diminishes the vitality of our patients." If the graveyard tombstones could but speak, this statement of Prof. Clark would be corroborated. It is not necessary, however, to bring the dead in as evidence. Let us content ourselves with the testimony of the dying, those who die gradually from poisonous treatment. If every dose diminishes the vitality, what would one expect the result to be if continued? Death of the entire living matter! When one dose of alcohol or any other poison is given to a patient, what is the result? It kills as far as it goes.

The quality of the alcohol is not changed, because the patient is in part still alive. To say that a small dose of any poison does not have the same effect proportionately

as a large dose, is a claim founded on ignorance and faulty observation. To administer poison in small pills covered with sugar does not change the quality of the poison. To take only one glass of an alcoholic beverage as medicine is fractional death of the sum total of life. This is denied only by the ignorant. The injury resulting from a small quantity of poison may not be appreciable to crude observation, but when mental or physical strain comes one needs all the vitality and living matter in the body that God has given.

Which person gets sick first, the conditions being similar? The one with the least vitality or power of endurance, or the strong and robust? It is always the former. This is corroborated by the statistics of even moderate drinkers. Does it not seem logical?

The old argument of the serpent in the garden of Eden is continually repeated, and the older the argument grows the more dangerous it is. Alcohol and other kindred poisons have been substituted for the apple and presented in every conceivable form. The saloonkeeper gets money for the accursed stuff, and has his alcohol in as many different forms as the physician has his poisons and alcohol. The former often gets money that has been earned to buy bread for hungry children. His market-place is a typical gilded palace of sin. He makes use of the arm of flesh as an advertisement, with the testimony of some man "mighty to drink wine," but totally ignorant of what his own testimony means—that alcoholic beverages aid in the assimilation of food. The majority of all who give such testimony give it after lustful experience, and their animal tissue accumulates at the expense of brain and intellectual development. Could it be possible for alcoholics to aid in assimilation? Is it possible for alcohol to ruin one man's stomach and digestive apparatus and improve another's? Or, in scriptural language, "Doth the fountain send forth at the same time sweet water and bitter?" These questions furnish food for reflection. To every intelligent person they need no answer.

The Apostle Paul says: "Take a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities," but I say, take good heed that you drink the wine which Paul refers to. Take exactly what Paul advises, lest it turn out like Shylock and his pound of flesh, and you will ultimately wish

that you had made no bargain for Paul's wine. Christ made wine at the marriage feast, but no drunkenness is recorded.

The teachings of the Bible are distinctly against the use of intoxicating liquor, and certainly Christ never set the example of giving it as a medicine. The most noted men in Scripture were total abstainers. Samson, the strongest man, abstained from it, as did his mother before him. He never assimilated any food by drinking Malt Extract.

Man was made in the image of his Creator, and the more we subject ourselves to that Creator and his laws, the more perfect will we become, and there is no beauty to be compared with the beauty of perfection. We behold vegetation transforming mineral substance into a higher vegetable kingdom; but as vegetation is dependent on the natural sun and on Nature's laws, so man must have free access to the Sun of righteousness. The channels of grace must not be obstructed.

Alcoholic liquor may be fitly compared to filthy, troubled water, that is continually throwing up mire and dirt.

A tree is known by its fruit, so alcohol is known by its results on man, and when applied in such a way, like the upas tree, can be discerned at speaking distance. The offensive odor emitted from a drunkard has a similar effect on the atmosphere to the waters of the Chicago river on Lake Michigan, and if hygienic rules were strictly enforced the drunkard would be compelled to wear a filter or be fumigated at regular intervals.

It is not necessary to do evil that good may come. Such procedure is supported only by worm-eaten theories, and it matters not whether the physician or saloonkeeper enforces it; it is wrong. It may seem a very laudable aim to donate money to build homes for the insane and morphine fiends. The physician is licensed to destroy brain and nerves with narcotics and poisons. The saloonkeeper is similarly authorized by law to traffic in a wholesale manner in the same death-dealing stuff, and the people who support such state laws pay dearly for these barbarous customs.

Alcohol is being used for the skin in the bath, but remember that the skin is supplied with the same blood as the brain. Alcohol destroys the healthy action of the skin by closing up excretory channels. It is not good for the

feet any more than the brain, unless it be to harden the sole (soul). Specimens of dead bodies are hardened by keeping in alcohol. It destroys the living and hardens the dead. Indeed, we might say with propriety, it hardens both living and dead.

Beer and "swill" are consumed in large quantities under the pretense that the "water is bad." People refuse to drink water with small germs in it, but they accept the beer and whiskey with "snakes." Poor, sin-ridden man, with his perverted desires and perverse ways! He strains at the gnat and swallows the camel.

The pious mother often has whiskey in the house for use as a medicine to break up a cold, and often Christian young men improperly use whiskey with quinine for a similar purpose; but such people consume more vitality than they derive good. It is inconsistent to use a single drop of alcoholic liquor and then advocate temperance. God can never bless such shallow inconsistency. Every drop consumed means support to the rum seller.

The great majority of Christian people do not want prohibition. If they did, they would prohibit the private use of alcoholic liquors in their homes, either as medicines or for any other purpose.

Science denies alcohol recognition as a medicine; experience proves it a curse; starvation and inebriate institutions, with degraded manhood, are its inevitable results and these too often proceed from the physician's prescriptions. The saloonkeeper has been ostracized from decent society, and when patriotic citizens do their duty he will be excluded from a seat in the city councils; but only the great demarkation line of God's truth will save us from the gangrenous fallacy carried around by those contaminating parasites who offer alcohol as a medicine.

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